

**IN THE SPECIFICATION:**

**The specification is changed as follows:**

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a1 Referring now to Figs. 2A-2C and 3A-3B, the ground electrode 116 has a welded portion 116c which has such a cross section as shown in Figs. 3A and 3B. Namely, the cross section of the welded portion 116C is polygonal and has a six corners R1 to R6. The cross section has a pair of opposite sides one of which corresponds to the side surface 116b of the ground electrode 116 and faces an outer circumferential periphery 37a of the front end face 37 of the metallic shell 30. The side corresponding to the side surface 116b ranges from the corner R1 to the corner R4. The side surface 116b is shaped so as to expand or protrude outward and contact or coincide at the corners R1 and R4 with the outer circumferential periphery 37a of the front end face 37 as shown in Fig. 3A. Namely, the side surface 116b has a central side surface section (i.e., a surface section between the corners R2 and R3) of the width L5 and parallely opposite to a central side surface section of the side surface 116a and a pair of oblique side surface sections (i.e., a surface section between the corners R1 and R2 and a surface section between the corners R3 and R4) at the opposite ends of the central side surface section. The side surface 116a of the ground electrode 116 includes a side surface portion 116g facing the front end face of the center electrode 12. The side surface 116a ranges from the corner R5 to the corner R6. Namely, the side surface 116a has the aforementioned central side surface section and a pair of rounded side surface sections at the opposite ends of the central side surface section.

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